

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 03304

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EEWT, EALR, AU, UR
SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN TRADE MISSION VISITS MOSCOW

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1. IN FOLLOW-THROUGH TO KREISKY DELEGATION VISIT IN FEBRUARY, FEDERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESIDENT SALLINGER LED A MAMMOTH GROUP (OVER 70) OF AUSTRIAN BUSINESS LEADERS TO MOSCOW FROM MARCH 28 TO 30. IN CONTRAST TO THE CHANCELLOR'S VISIT (AND, WE SUSPECT, BECAUSE OF THE SOMEWHAT DISAPPOINTING ECONOMIC RESULTS OF IT) THE SALLINGER GROUP WAS LOW KEY. NONETHELESS, EXPECTATIONS WERE HIGH AND IT WAS STRESSED THAT EACH DELEGATION MEMBER REPRESENTED A COMPANY ALREADY IN CONTACT WITH SOVIET AGENCIES.

2. THE SOVIETS AGAIN PROVED TO BE VERY HARD BARGAINERS AND AFTER THREE DAYS THE GROUP RETURNED WITH SOME ORDERS OF UNKNOWN VALUE FOR YARN AND MACHINE TOOLS, BUT--AS FAR AS WE CAN ASCERTAIN--WITH LITTLE ELSE. ONE RANKING MEMBER OF THE GROUP TOLD US THAT THE RESULTS COULD HARDLY BE CONSIDERED "RECORD BREAKING". THERE IS THE USUAL TALK OF "FURTHER STEPS HAVING BEEN
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TAKEN" AND "FOLLOW ON NEGOTIATIONS PLANNED", BUT THE ONLY SOVIET FTO DELEGATION KNOWN TO BE COMING IN THE NEAR FUTURE IS AN AUTOMOTIVE GROUP.

3. ALTHOUGH WE EXPECT THAT THERE WILL BE SOME FURTHER CONCRETE RESULTS FROM THIS EXTENSIVE GOA EFFORT, THE INDICATIONS SO FAR OF THE USSR'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE

AUSTRIAN MISSION ARE THAT:

- A) THE PRIMARY SOVIET RESPONSE TO THE GOA'S REQUEST TO BUY MORE IN ORDER TO REDUCE AUSTRIA'S GROWING BILATERAL TRADE DEFICIT WAS THE COUNTER-SUGGESTION THAT AUSTRIA REDUCE ITS IMPORTS OF SOVIET OIL AND GAS; AND
- B) DESPITE AUSTRIAN HOPES FOR A "POLITICAL GESTURE", THE AUSTRIAN BUSINESS PROPOSALS WILL BE STUDIED BY THE SOVIETS WITHIN THE EXISTING PLANNING SCHEDULE AND ON THEIR INDIVIDUAL MERITS REGARDING TECHNOLOGICAL AND PRICE ADVANTAGES VIS-A-VIS OTHER WESTERN PRODUCTS.

4. ALTHOUGH THE SOVIETS SUGGESTED DURING THE KREISKY VISIT THAT AUSTRIA CONSIDER MAKING PAYMENTS IN TRANSFERABLE RUBLES, THE AUSTRIANS RECEIVED THIS SUGGESTION VERY COOLY AND THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT IT WAS REVIVED THIS TIME. ONE GOA OFFICIAL ALSO TOLD US THAT WHEN THE TRANSFERABLE RUBLE WAS DISCUSSED THERE WAS NO UNIFORM SOVIET POSITION: THE FINANCIAL OFFICIALS TENDED TO ENCOURAGE ITS USE, WHILE THE FTO REPRESENTATIVES WERE OPPOSED. WOLF
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